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Im Auftrag des Vorstandes herausgegeben von
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Inhaltsverzeichnis

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Education as an academic discipline in Great Britain

1. The Institutionalisation of Education as an Academic and Research Discipline: current policies, conflicts and future outcomes

1.1. Finding some analytical concepts

Conceptualising the process of institutionalised change in Education is fraught with problems, and, depending on which way up you stand, it looks different if you take a managerial or a neo-marxist perspective. For the managerial, I begin with the American ROBERT BIRNBAUM's (1988) definition of the concept of „governance", if only because his thesis unlike some models of organisation, allows us to recognise the complexity of organisational behaviour. BIRNBAUM's definition of „governance" is: „structures and processes through which institutional participants interact with each other and communicate with the larger environment."

He defines three levels of structure and processes which act to control the interac-

tions of participants: the technical (teaching and learning), the managerial (the rules and regulations which establish and define the boundaries for interaction), and the institutional level where policies are made and external relationships negotiated. Belief that systems of management can be modelled this way, and used by management to implement organisational change, is now very strong. The belief is tied to the assumption that there are rules and mechanisms which define procedures, affect standards and produce costs. In a private market, or under the constraints of a public budget, the ultimate sanction is financial accountability.

Nevertheless BIRNBAUM's definition is not unproblematic. His four „ideal" models of governance of institutions of Higher Education in the U.S.: the collegial, with its liberal arts tradition and shared power; the bureaucratic, with its administrative rules and regulations; the political with its interest group negotiation; and the anarchic where everyone moves as their own spirits guide them; have to be set alongside his view that all four, in practice, coexist in a complex, unpredictable mix. Taken in a real context the neat models vanish and the apparent usefulness of his formulation for controlling or predicting the consequences of policy changes disappears. Furthermore, actual events may well defy attempts to fit them into coherent, rational, patterns. It is nonetheless the case that educational institutions are currently being subjected to a restructuring process which has profound implications for the patterns of interaction. Where it will all lead is altogether rather more uncertain.

Writing from a neo-marxist perspective in the Britain of the early 1980s, BOWE und WHITTY (1983, 1984) drew on RAYMOND WILLIAMS (1961) to devlope the argument that educational change represented a pattern of compromises between the old humanists, industrial trainers and public educators. Old Tories, Universities and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination Boards represented the „old humanist" tradition; industrial trainers came from the industrial lobby of the conservative party and the corporatist elements in the labour party; and the public educators were the local authorities, teachers and the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) Boards. More recently BOWE and WHITTY (1990) have argued that there are now „considerable fissures within" and „new alliances between" these groups (p.413).

Clearly there are differences in the formulations, but we might recognise the „Old Humanists" somewhere in the collegial. The industrial trainers, on the other hand, are largely defunct and have been replaced by the Business Schools with their new technology, management models and minds tuned to subjects like commercial law and accountancy. These have become the brains behind the new technical bureaucracies. With a little creative thinking, we can find something of the public educators in the anarchic, with their belief that, given the right values, and the right values include tolerance, people should be free to make a case, based on the evidence, which leaves everyone to make their own choices.

In defence of their respective interests, all three groups meet in the political arena of conflict, bargaining and compromise.

Just at the moment, the new technical bureaucracies appear to have considerable

power. The growth in centralised control, measurable inputs and outputs, and tight reins on the budget, seem to be in the ascendant, appear to follow a managerial model and have a life of their own. But events are not quite so simple if only because the apparent rigidity of technical bureaucratic systems is tied rhetorically to consumer choice in the market. So let us turn to British Education Institutions and what is happening to the education of school teachers.

1.2. Educating Teachers: The pattern of change

In Britain, although technical approaches to managing and controlling organisations have not yet reached the levels of sophistication demanded by the forms of budget control practised in the U.S., there is much evidence that current policies are working to reshape public service organisations along three dimensions: the devolution of budgets, competition for markets, and tighter central controls over „standards". The result has been to give the impression that institutions are in a considerable flux. To illustrate the extent of change in teacher education, we must first note the pattern of the recent past.

One of the things that strikes the teaching staff in my college is the rapid rise in the numbers of students, the increased number of mature (usually female students) and the increased representation of ethnic minority groups. This goes along with the decline in the number of staff and their ageing profile.

However, there are also changes in Education courses. For something like ten years, there have been only two ways to enter school teaching. One is the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), taken in one year by students who have already obtained a first degree. It represents the traditional route for subject teachers in secondary schools, and has its origins in University Departments of Education; the hunting ground of the old humanists. The second route is the Bachelor of Education Honours Degree (B.Ed.), which has evolved with the rising standard of the training, first established at a minimal level, for elementary school teachers at the end of the nineteenth century. Its routes are in the Colleges of Higher Education, which themselves evolved out of the Teacher Training Colleges, bastions of a service morality, linked to a missionary tradition. Here, in the teacher training colleges, is the ideology of the public educator.

Over the last ten years or so, there has been a reduction of the status difference in this binary divide, at least in the area of teacher education. University Departments of Education have taken on board the B.Ed., as it gained respectability of honours degree level. University teachers thus became associates with the growth in the training of teachers for the three to eleven year olds and the child-centred, rather than subject centred ideology it espoused. Many teachers in University Departments of Education came to associate themselves with the public educators. At the same time, Polytechnics and Colleges of Higher Education (established in the 1960s), were acquiring the experience and status which came from degree level work and which enabled them to take on the training of teachers for both second-

ary and primary schools, through the subject-specialist route of the PGCE. Some at least of the College and Polytechnic staff became interested in educational research, particularly as the „psychometric" approach yielded ground to classroom ethnography and teacher educators came to know and respect one anothers work through professional encounters at courses and conferences. Colleges and Polytechnics were technical, bureaucratic and collegial.

However, the B.Ed. itself has also been changing as the state Department of Education and Science intervened to shift teacher education towards a training which combined a more academic approach to chosen subject disciplines with a more technical approach to classroom skills.

With the prospect of the introduction of a more „subject-centred" curriculum for primary schools, following an attack on the quality of new teachers entering schools, 25% of whom were deemed less than satisfactory by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMSO 1985), the Department of Education and Science demanded new Bachelor of Education courses with a dominant place given to the study of a main subject drawn from traditional disciplines. Education courses dropped their academic content in philosophy, psychology and sociology, and pedagogy shifted into classrooms. The new academic respectabilty came from using participant-observation as an action-research approach. In consequence, there was more encouragement for research to become part of teaching, and to take an evaluative approach to classroom issues.

The new B.Ed. courses had to gain approval from the DES sponsored Council for Accreditation of Teachers Education as well as obtain academic validation. Accreditation needed a significant proportion of staff who had returned to classroom teaching to gain recent and relevant experience.

It is difficult to go further without introducing the Education Reform Act of 1988. This Act stipulated, among other things, a National Curriculum for schools, a national programme of testing and assessment for pupils at 7, 11, and 14 years as well as the joint 16+ GCSE which was already running; the devolution of budgets to school governing bodies, and the chance to opt out of local authority control and into a direct government grant. In April 1989, the Colleges of Higher Education and the Polytechnics gained corporate status and independence from local authority control. A new funding council called the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council was established, in parallel with the Universities Funding Council. The Funding Councils required institutions to bid for finance and the key indicator was student number. Courses were grouped, classified, and labelled, new procedures were laid down, new criteria established.

In all these changes, including the new National Curriculum, its procedures for assessment and the financial management, we can see the mind of the technical-bureaucrat. Nonetheless the picture is complicated by the belief, now common in media portrayals of teaching, that teacher education has been appropriated by YOUNG and WHITTY's (op.cit.) „public educators". „Public educators", as I have indicated, now include University Departments of Education as well as Polytechnics and Colleges, although the demands of the National Curriculum, National As-

sessment, and the Local Management of School budgets, threatens to isolate them from those implementing the programmes, as „out of touch with reality". In recent weeks, the enemies of education have been portrayed in the media as having their power base in the Teacher Training courses, where they promulgate an ideology of teacher-as-„facilitator", rather than tutor. The case against them is that they stand back from telling students anything, leaving them to reinvent the wheel by discovery methods (PHILLIPS 1990), and hence avoiding their responsibilities for pupils' progress. More recent still is the allegation by the rightwing Adam Smith Institute (O'KEEFA 1990) that teacher training has been engaged in an experiment in social engineering which has been anti-streaming, against competitive examinations and anti-elitist. Teacher Educators are accused of promoting open-plan classrooms, abolishing formal grades, and bringing in team-teaching, free-expression, „practical" mathematics, the „new history", and a „hydra-headed cult" of equality of opportunity.

This kind of attack is not of course new. The criticisms coming from the Adam Smith Institute are not dissimilar from those in the Black Papers in the late 1960s and early 1970s (COX and DYSON 1969a; COX 1969b; COX and DYSON 1970; COX and BOYSON 1975). They might broadly be construed as an attack by BOWE and WHITTY's (1984) „old humanist" brigade on the more progressive approaches then being advocated, but not (it was then argued) much in evidence, in schools (BENNETT 1976). The horror tales of spectacularly bad schools have not changed either, although there is no hard evidence of any general worsening of standards over time, and there is evidence that effective schools are those with a coherent and shared understanding of the values espoused by the institution (GRAY 1990).

2. *Research Paradigms*

This part I want to keep very brief. The traditional controversies across positivistic and hermeneutic (interpretative) research paradigms are European wide. In the 1980s, as far as British Education is concerned, pretensions to objective science appear to me to have faded. It seems fair to say that positivistic and interpretative methodological approaches have (almost) ceased to be seen as antagonistic. Once credence is given to the view that the same, or similar experiences may be seen from different perspectives, insights, rather than truths becomes an interpretive matter of weighing up the strength of evidence obtained from different approaches to the problem. At the same time, the more deterministic and structuralist, neomarxist formulations have failed to accommodate agents of change without resorting to simplistic reductionism. There is less presumption that the social sciences will discover universal laws, outside of specific social contexts.

„Objective" and „subjective" may have ceased to be rigidly appropriated by positivistic or interpretive methodologies and become a matter of critical judgement. Different methodologies now seem more complementary with the broader differences, more a matter of style and frame of reference. It is possible now to talk of quantitative and qualitative approaches and to focus the methodological disputes on the appropriateness and rigour of the methodology in relation to the problem,

rather than on its claim to scientific orthodoxies. In particular, the current demand for improved classroom practice and teacher accountability, has helped to establish the credibility of action-research as a way of evaluating professional practice.

Drawing on some of the debates in the literature (CARR 1980, 1985; CARR and KEMMIS 1986; WHITEHEAD and LOMAX 1987), we can formulate the differences in methodology as below:

Table 1: Categories of action research and professional development

Form of action research	Technical	Practical	Critical
Research Knowledge Theory and Practice	Objective explanations Instrumental applied research	Subjective understandings Deliberative: Informs judgement	Objective understandings Reflective: Transforms understanding
Conception of science	Natural scientific	Interpretative	Critical
Basis of professionalism	Professional knowledge and skill	Professional ethic	Professional responsibility and autonomy
Professional development	Effective teaching	Enlightened understanding	Emancipated practice.

Reproduced from CARR 1985, p. 7

Following a comment made by JACK WHITEHEAD (WHITEHEAD and LOMAX 1987), my question here is, to what extent do these differences simply represent the different questions we want research to answer? Technical approaches help us to ask the question, „how do we make it work?" Practical questions are those which address a situation and ask, „how can we make it work better?" And critical questions are those which ask, „how can we change the way things work creatively for the better?" The assumptions behind the technical questions asked of teaching and learning, rest on the belief that both processes are a matter of technique rather than either understanding or personal autonomy and responsibility. The assumptions behind the practical questions are not unrelated to the concerns of the „old humanists" for enlightenment, for truth and beauty. The critical questions come from those who believe that it is possible to work for a better world. WHITEHEAD argued that this representation appropriates emancipatory knowledge into propositional logic. But the conflicts are not scientific but ideological if you see it the other way up. Science can be reclaimed into emancipatory discourses.

This is not the place to go into the growth of action-research, merely to note its growing use and importance for practictioners. But a significant development has been the establishment of the Classroom Action Research Network from the University of East Anglia, which has spawned local groups across the country.

It is also worth noting that as teachers move into action research, the state Department of Education and Science is withdrawing funds for large scale projects. For example, there is no DES funded major research project to monitor the Education Reform Act, although there is a National Youth Survey which supplies data annually on young people to both the DES and the Department of Trade and Industry and is analysed at Sheffield University. A similar project is going on in Scotland. The questions cover employment as well as education and qualifications and are designed to address issues of specific interest to policy.

As with Action Research by teachers, the response to the decline of large projects is the growth of networks of researchers. I have a list of around a hundred who are looking into aspects of the ERA's consequences. Independently from this, the British Education Research Association has also formed four Task Groups to monitor research findings on the ERA. These are covering curriculum, assessment, local management of schools and teacher education, and are establishing networks of interested people. The groups are particularly concerned to raise the public profile of education research when relevant policy issues are being discussed. Some of the researchers into the „technical" aspects of educational issues do not have the „public educator" tradition and come from economics, accountancy, law etc., disciplines concerned with finance and management. I have contact with several who are investigating aspects of the Local Management of Schools.

So another interesting feature is that some of the people in the networks of education researchers are working in recently established Research Centres funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. ESRC policy is now to concentrate research into large centres with an interdisciplinary approach and long-term funding. The performance of the centre is reviewed after five years against their objectives. The 1989 list of them shows the decline of purely education issues and also how they are being incorporated into a wider context:

Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre, Belfast.
Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge.
ESRC Data Archive, University of Essex.
Centre for the Study of Microsocial Change, University of Essex.
Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh.
Centre for the Study of Human Communication, University of Edinburgh.
Research Unit in Health and Behavioural Change, University of Edinburgh.
Centre for Labour Economics, London School of Economics.
Centre for Sociolegal Studies, Wolfson College, Oxford.
MRC/ESRC Social and Applied Psychology Unit, University of Sheffield.
Centre for Social Work Research, University of Stirling.

Centre for Science, Technology & Energy Policy, University of Sussex.
Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick.
ESRC Macronomic Modelling Bureau, University of Warwick.
Industrial Relations Research Unit, University of Warwick.
Centre for Health Economics, University of York.

Education research then, is moving in two directions: into a wide base of action-research oriented to the evaluation and improvement of professional practice; and into „Centres of excellence" where education issues are placed into a wider social context. Yet it is also coming together, and the coming together is at the level of networks, assisted by the new technology.

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